



# UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
United States Patent and Trademark Office  
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450  
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/761,629	01/20/2004	Joseph A. Zupanick	067083.0298	3323

26231 7590 06/21/2004

FISH & RICHARDSON P.C.  
5000 BANK ONE CENTER  
1717 MAIN STREET  
DALLAS, TX 75201

EXAMINER
----------

KRECK, JOHN J

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
----------	--------------

3673

DATE MAILED: 06/21/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

## Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/761,629

Applicant(s)

ZUPANICK, JOSEPH A.

Examiner

John Kreck

Art Unit

3673

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

### Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

### Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on \_\_\_\_.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

### Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-72 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-72 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

### Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

### Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- \* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

### Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date \_\_\_\_.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. \_\_\_\_.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_.

Art Unit: 3673

### DETAILED ACTION

The preliminary amendment has been entered.

Claims 1-72 are pending.

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112***

The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

1. Claims 1-24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. The claim(s) contains subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventor(s), at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention. These claims all call for "a drainage well bore pattern comprising one or more lateral well bores". The specification (as filed in the parent application) fails to disclose any pattern with one lateral well bore.

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

2. Claims 1-24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. These claims call for a

Art Unit: 3673

"drainage well bore pattern comprising one or more lateral well bores". It is not clear how one well bore can be a pattern. It is suggested that applicant change the phrase to "a drainage well bore or a drainage well bore pattern comprising a plurality of lateral well bores"; for examination purposes, the claim has been interpreted as if it requires a single well bore or a well bore pattern.

This language can be compared with the language from claim 6 in the parent application, which calls for a "drainage well bore". It is apparent that the word "pattern" is used to further limit the drainage bore, but it is not clear how one skilled in the art could differentiate a single well bore which is not a pattern from a single well bore which is a pattern.

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102***

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

3. Claims 1-5, 11-19, 21-23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Hsu (U.S. Patent number 5,868,202).

Hsu shows the system including first wellbore (21); second wellbore (22); junction (near 28); and drainage well bore [pattern] comprising one or more lateral well bores (13) as called for in claim 1.

Hsu teaches coal as called for in claim 2.

Art Unit: 3673

With regards to claim 3, methane gas can be produced from the Hsu system.

Hsu teaches the vertical bore as called for in claim 4.

Hsu teaches the cavity as called for in claim 5.

Hsu teaches the slanted bore as called for in claim 11.

Hsu teaches the drilling through the second bore as called for in claim 12.

With regards to claim 13, the region shown by 12 anticipates a sump.

Hsu shows the drainage on one side of the junction as called for in claim 14.

With regards to claim 15, water can clearly be produced.

With regards to claims 16-19; Hsu fails to explicitly teach the pumping unit.

Official notice is taken of the fact that it is well known to use pumping units in wells, and to position the pump inlet at a location which minimizes debris or interference, and to use rod-pumping units.

With regards to claim 21, gas and water can be simultaneously produced by the Hsu system.

With regards to claim 22, it is clear that the Hsu system can be used with an area defined in any shape: the Hsu reference teaches the structure, the claim limitation defining an area in which the structure exists does not further limit the structure.

Hsu teaches the horizontal [pattern] as called for in claim 23.

### ***Double Patenting***

4. The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. See *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and, *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent is shown to be commonly owned with this application. See 37 CFR 1.130(b).

Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

5. Claims 1-72 are rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims of U.S. Patent Nos. 6,425,448; 6,732,792; 6,679,322; 6,598,686; 6,561,288; and 6,425,448. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because the differences represent only slight changes in wording.

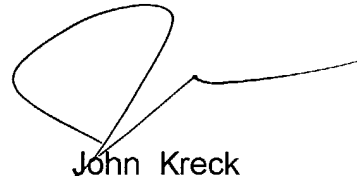
Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to John Kreck whose telephone number is (703)308-2725. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 5:30 am - 2:00 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Heather Shackelford can be reached on (703)308-2978.

Art Unit: 3673

The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Kreck', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

John Kreck  
Examiner  
Art Unit 3673

JJK